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## Bridgewell Receives \$690,000 in Federal Funds to Build Housing

March 10, 2009 □ Bridgewell, a Lynnfield-based nonprofit that provides services to people with disabilities in 18 communities north of Boston, recently received a \$690,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

**Bridgewell** will use the grant to build a five-bedroom, 2,500-square-foot, fully accessible ranch home for five residents with disabilities.

Bridgewell's Chief Executive Officer, Robert S. Stearns said □Bridgewell is pleased to have the opportunity to develop this new home, which represents part of our ongoing commitment to provide accessible housing for individuals with disabilities. We would like to thank the congressional delegation and local legislators for their assistance and support in securing the funding for a project that addresses a critical need. The funding is particularly helpful in this time of limited resources. □

Bridgewell manages 60 other group homes on the North Shore and Merrimack Valley.

Retrofitting an existing home can be difficult and is too expensive, said Elaine White, director of housing at Bridgewell. To be more cost-efficient, Bridgewell is starting from scratch. "The house will be entirely handicap-accessible," she was quoted in a recent article in The Salem News.

When the home is completed, it will be occupied by individuals referred to Bridgewell by the Massachusetts Department of Mental Retardation, where a waiting list has already started.

"This type of housing allows people with disabilities to live independently in the community and lead a full quality of life," White said.

Congressman John Tierney said the funding for the project couldn't have come at a better time.

"Like many communities across the nation, Danvers is facing a shortage of affordable housing, and especially housing for adults with disabilities," Tierney said. □This funding will allow Bridgewell to build affordable homes for local residents who require supportive services, and will allow more people with disabilities to lead independent, satisfying, safe, and meaningful lives in their communities. □

The federal government has approved the project, and Bridgewell is going through the final process of securing a state grant of \$350,000. Founded in 1958, Bridgewell provides services in the areas of residential, day habilitation, homelessness and employment training as well as recreational and adult educational opportunities.

Bridgewell, known until 2005 as the Greater Lynn Mental Health and Retardation Association, provides supports to 3,000 individuals at more than 100 sites in 18 communities in Essex and Middlesex counties.